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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT — TUESDAY, OCT. 1, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S.D.A.

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Today more questions come out of the mailbag. And as usual most of the questions are about food. The answers today come from scientists at various State agricultural experiment stations.

Here's a question about a common root vegetable, the parsnip. A housewife writes: "In our family we have always eaten a good many parsnips during the winter. We leave them in the ground and dig them only as we use them. Parsnips come in handy in the late winter and early spring when it's hard to get fresh vegetables. But lately I have been wondering if parsnips are such a good vegetable after all. The books I read about diet say a good deal about minerals and vitamins in the green and yellow vegetables, but not much about parsnips and other root vegetables. I am beginning to think parsnips may be mostly starch and roughage. Will you tell me whether they contain any vitamins?"

Parsnips are rather low in vitamin A and most green and yellow vegetables happen to be rich in this vitamin. But parsnips contain some vitamin B. And just recently scientists at the Montana Experiment Station have reported that parsnips are a good source of vitamin C. The Montana scientists tested fried parsnips, boiled parsnips, and mashed parsnips and found them all good in vitamin C. Even after parsnips had been in the ground all winter they rated "fair" in vitamin C.

Maybe the parship has not been receiving the credit it deserves as a valuable winter vegetable. Winter and early spring are the seasons when people are likely to run low in vitamin C which parsnips can help supply. As this letter points out, farm families find parsnips convenient because these vegetables can stay in the

ground all winter. Exposure to freezing and thawing does not harm them, as it does other vegetables. In fact, parsnips improve in quality as they stay in the ground. Let's give the parsnip its due as a convenient vegetable that helps supply the vitamin C everybody needs every day.

Another letter this week inquires about vitamins in meat. The letter says: "I have always understood that meat supplies protein and fat in the diet, but that vitamins came from other foods. Recently I heard that pork was rich in vitamin B. Is this true?"

Yes, scientists at the Wisconsin Experiment Station have found lean pork to be a rich source of vitamin B, particularly the part of vitamin B called B-one. B-one is necessary for growth, for a healthy appetite, and as a protection against nervous disorders.

Dr. Elvejehm of the Wisconsin Station says: "One pork chop, even after thorough frying, may supply all the vitamin B-one a normal person needs in one day." The same holds true of lean roast pork, or ham, either fresh or smoked, but not of "salt pork," which is mostly fat.

Now here's a letter from a lady who questions whether grown people need milk. She writes: "Do people really need milk after they are grown? All the animals except man stop drinking milk when they grow out of babyhood. This would seem to be nature's plan. Why then should human animals need milk all their lives?"

The nutrition scientists answer this way. They point out that human animals continue to grow for a longer period after weaning than most of the milk-drinking animals. Human bones and teeth take a longer time to grow and during this time need the calcium milk supplies. Most nutrition scientists now recommend a quart of milk a day for every growing child because they have found children need this

much milk for proper growth.

After a human being has his growth he still needs milk. though not so much. He needs milk to keep up repairs on his bones and teeth even up to old age. Recent studies have shown that older men need just as much calcium as young men. Nutrition scientists now believe one reason old people's bones often become weak and easy to break is that these people have gone for so many years on diets too low in calcium. You often hear about old people who have fallen and broken bones. Some physicians now are of the opinion that the broken bone causes the fall instead of the fall causing the broken bone. They say bones may become weaker and weaker over the years until they break and cause a fall.

Here is still another answer to the argument that animals take no milk after babyhood and man can do likewise. Scientists now have considerable proof that some animals at least are in better condition if they are fed plenty of milk through life. Dr. Henry Sherman carried on an experiment with 2 colonies of rats in his laboratory. He kept and fed these 2 colonies for more than 40 generations. The food one colony ate was one-sixth dried whole milk. The other colony had twice as much milk. The rats on the smaller amount of milk grew well enough; raised their young; and in general were in good health throughout life. But the rats on twice as much milk were even better. They grew better; they matured earlier; they had larger families and stronger young; in every way they were healthier animals. Most interesting of all was the fact that rats raised on more milk lived longer and were older when they showed the first signs of old age.

So perhaps a diet containing plenty of milk all through life is one way to postpone old age. History, too, has showed again and again that the races of people whose diets contained generous portions of dairy foods have been unusually strong and sturdy even up to old age.

That answers all the questions out of the mailbag today. More questions and more answers are on schedule for Thursday.

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